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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA. 02108



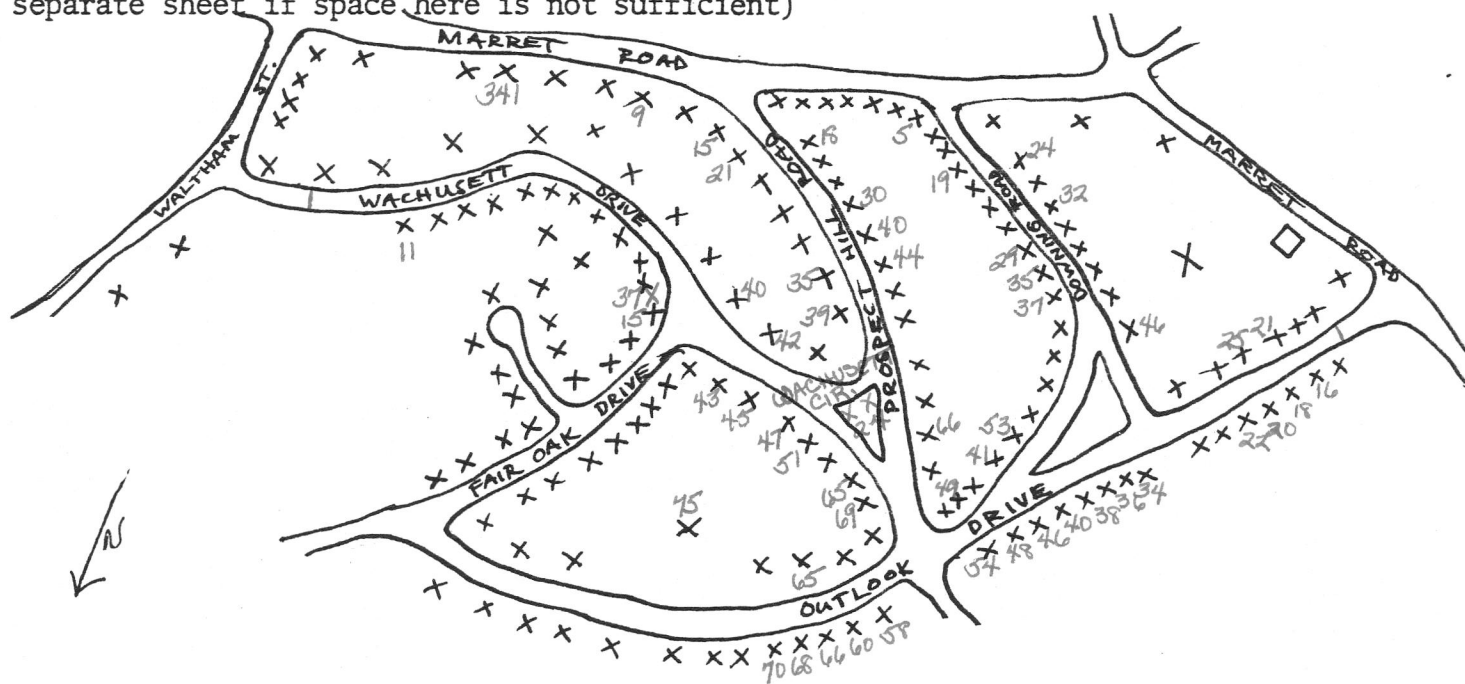
Lexington

of area (if any) Fair Oaks

al date or period street system

1910

Sketch map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient)



Recorded by Anne Grady

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date March, 1984

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

Of the original Fair Oaks development scheme, only the road system became a reality. Situated on the southern slope of Loring Hill, the roads, Prospect Hill Road, Wachussetts Drive, Fair Oaks Drive, Downing Road and Outlook Drive, curve gently with the slope of the hill. Of the original plan for triangles of green space where roads joined, only one triangle survives, now called Wachussetts Circle, and several houses have been built on it. Only two or three of the houses retain the original ample-sized lots. Fifty-two house lots were part of the original plan, but nearly three times that many houses have been built.

With a few exceptions, the houses actually built are modest structures which date from perhaps the mid-1920s to the recent past. There are about equal numbers of pre- and post-World War II buildings. Styles represented include Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial, Cape, Bungalow, Tudor Vernacular, Ranch, and Contemporary.

(see Continuation Sheet)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific).

The Fair Oaks development was conceived with the highest of intentions by a landscape architect to exemplify the fundamental principles of landscape architecture. Had it been built, it might well have been one of Lexington's most significant areas.

The land for which the development was proposed had been the estate of Dr. Robert Means Lawrence, a physician who studied in Vienna and Paris, as well as at Harvard, and who wrote about medical folklore, psychotherapy and genealogy.

In 1909 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts secured an option to purchase the land for a hospital for the insane on the cottage plan. Lexington residents adopted a resolution against the hospital and over 1,000 of them attended a protest meeting at the Statehouse. The plan was subsequently dropped and that same year the land was laid out in house lots. For some reason, a layout here was not approved by the town until 1924.

The development was designed and managed by Arthur E. Horton, a landscape architect who had worked for the Metropolitan Park Commission in Boston for 10 years designing boulevards, parks and reservations. Most of the work was done under the direction of Charles Eliot of the firm of Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot of Brookline, the descendant firm of Frederick Law Olmsted.

In a 40-page promotional booklet entitled A Home in the Country Horton states, "it is only fair to say that Fair Oaks is the direct result of the inspiration I derived from" the writings of Andrew Jackson Downing, particularly Downing's Landscape Gardening and Rural Architecture. Interestingly, Downing's

(see Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Horton, Arthur E. A Home in the Country, undated. Widener Library, Harvard.

Hudson, Charles. History of the Town of Lexington, revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society, Volume II, p. 354. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.

Worthen, Edwin B. A Calendar History of Lexington, Massachusetts 1620-1946, pp. 107, 118. Lexington: Lexington Savings Bank, 1946.

(see Continuation Sheet)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Lexington

Form No:

Y

Property Name: Fair Oaks

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The two most noteworthy houses in the area appear to have been built before the promotional brochure was put out (c. 1910-1915). These are the house at 341 Marrett Road, a one-story shingled structure with hip roof, fieldstone basement story, and fieldstone verandas; and the house at 75 Outlook Drive, built by George E. Briggs and designed by Willard Brown. Built before 1913, it is one of Brown's substantial houses, Colonial Revival in overall character, but with other more subtle influences: a portico with exposed, shaped beams, perhaps of Japanese derivation.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

ancestors had owned the Fair Oaks parcel before 1835, a point not lost on Horton. Horton makes reference to other principal theorists of late eighteenth century and nineteenth century landscape design, J.C. Loudon and Sir Uvedale Price, in his promotional literature. While these references may have been a bit obscure to the home builders he sought, they indicate the seriousness with which Horton approached the project. He further states, "I have long felt that the fundamental principles of landscape architecture could be as satisfactorily applied to the development of one to four acre lots as they have been in the case of large estates." He mentions the importance of roads; "lack of study in locating roads has resulted in completely destroying many beautiful house sites."

He began his plan by making a "thorough topographical survey of the entire estate, showing the necessary detail of contour, tree and ledge." This enabled him to create the layout "without wasting a single important tree or ledge." Lot lines were "actually frames to control individual pictures," and house sites were selected so that construction of houses would not interfere with distant views" and would provide privacy. "You will not have to build in the shadow of your neighbors house" is declared in bold type.

The roads were built as laid out, curving gently to follow the topography of the south-facing wooded slope. There were ample triangles of green space at the junctions of the curved roads (see accompanying plan). The names Horton chose for his roads reflect his intentions and his source of inspiration: Downing Road; Wachusett Drive (much is made in the booklet of vistas of Mt. Wachusett); Prospect Hill Road; Outlook Drive.

There are numerous photographs of the area in Horton's booklet. Several pen and ink drawings done in a very sketchy style entitled "Just a Hint" suggest appropriate house designs. Evidently Horton thought a very picturesque Old English style was suitable for his development.

Although there is no date on the booklet, it seems likely to have been put out between 1910 and 1915. Why none of the lots was sold and built upon according to this scheme has not been discovered. Horton continued to live in the area until his death in 1921. When the street layout was accepted by the town in 1924 it was very likely a revised layout, for there are now 150 lots in the area.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Unidentified newspaper clipping in album in possession of Elizabeth Wright.

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**AREA Y
FAIR OAKS**

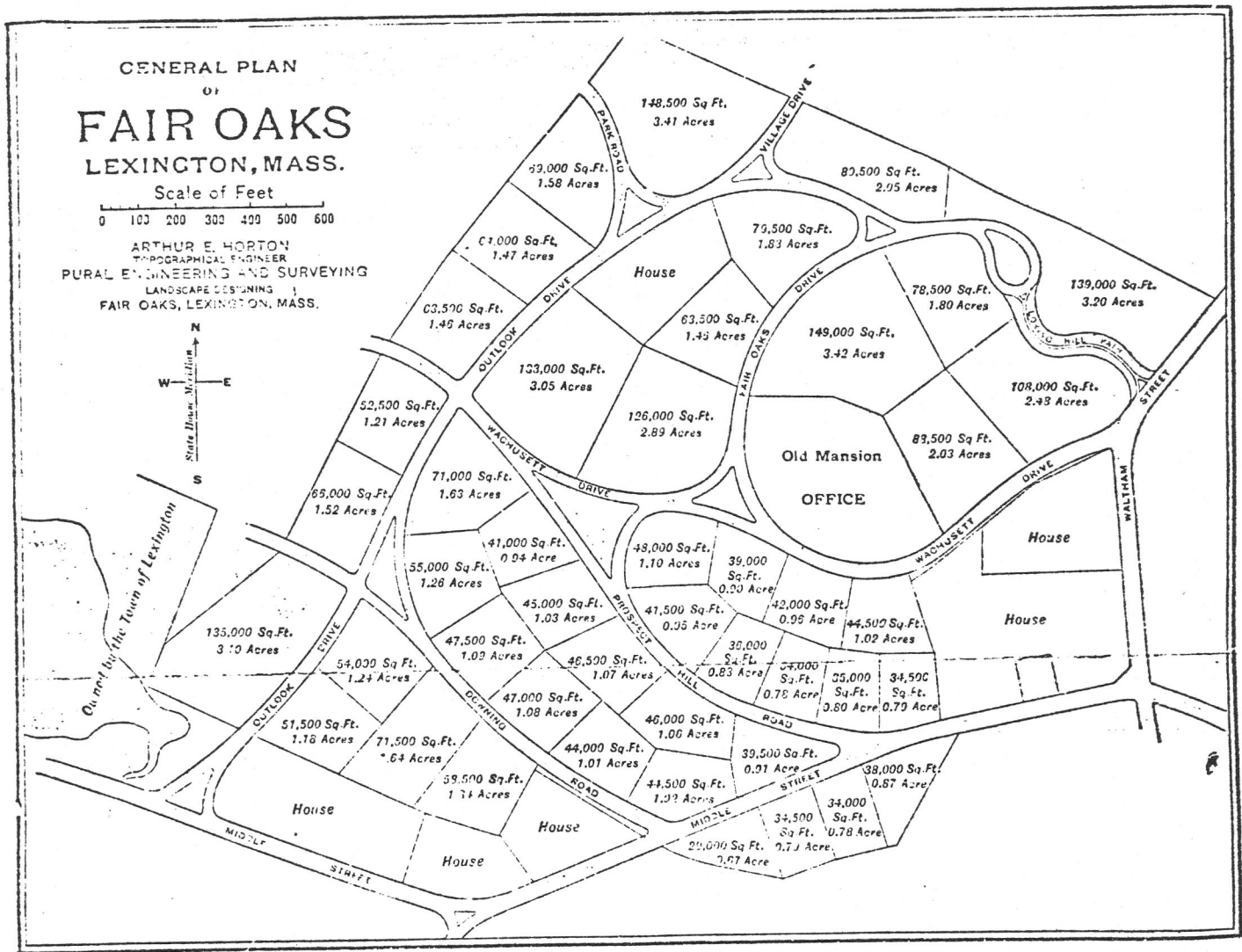
Address	Style	Date (if known)	MHC Number
5 Downing Road	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
19 Downing Road	Colonial Revival (sided)	before 1935	
24 Downing Road	Craftsman/Colonial Revival	after 1935	
26 Downing Road	Brick Craftsman	after 1935	
29 Downing Road	English Revival	before 1935	
32 Downing Road	Colonial Revival (altered)	before 1935	
35 Downing Road	English cottage	before 1935	
37 Downing Road	Craftsman/Colonial Revival	before 1935	
43 Downing Road	Craftsman Cape	before 1935	
46 Downing Road	Brick 1930s	before 1935	
53 Downing Road	Frame Tudor Revival	after 1935	
15 Fair Oaks Drive	Craftsman	before 1935	
341 Marrett Rd.	Shingle Style	c. 1910	
16 Outlook Drive	Colonial Revival	before 1935	
18 Outlook Drive	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
20 Outlook Drive	Bungalow	before 1935	
21 Outlook Drive	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
22 Outlook Drive	Frame Tudor Revival	before 1935	
25 Outlook Drive	English cottage	before 1935	
34 Outlook Drive	Colonial Revival	before 1935	
36 Outlook Drive	Bungalow	before 1935	
38 Outlook Drive	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
40 Outlook Drive	Colonial Revival	before 1935	
41 Outlook Drive	Frame Tudor Revival cottage	after 1935	
46 Outlook Drive	4-Square	before 1935	
48 Outlook Drive	Bungalow	before 1935	
49 Outlook Drive	Frame Tudor Revival w. brick entry	before 1935	
54 Outlook Drive	Colonial Revival	after 1935	
58 Outlook Drive	Dutch Colonial Revival (altered)	before 1935	
60 Outlook Drive	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
65 Outlook Drive	Craftsman/Colonial Revival	after 1935	
66 Outlook Drive	Craftsman (sided)	before 1935	
68 Outlook Drive	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
70 Outlook Drive	Bungalow	before 1935	
75 Outlook Drive	Colonial Revival ("Fair Oaks")	1910	1108, 1109
9 Prospect Hill Road	Spanish Mission Bungalow	c. 1912	1110
15 Prospect Hill Road	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
18 Prospect Hill Road	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
21 Prospect Hill Road	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
30 Prospect Hill Road	Craftsman/Colonial Revival	before 1935	
35 Prospect Hill Road	Frame Tudor Revival	before 1935	
39 Prospect Hill Road	Frame Tudor Revival w. addition	before 1935	
40 Prospect Hill Road	20 th c. Eclectic (brick, tile roof)	1914	1111
44 Prospect Hill Road	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
65 Prospect Hill Road	Colonial Revival	before 1935	
66 Prospect Hill Road	Frame Tudor Revival	after 1935?	
69 Prospect Hill Road	Colonial Revival	after 1935	
2 Wachusett Circle	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	

4 Wachusett Circle	Colonial Revival	before 1935	
11 Wachusett Drive	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
37 Wachusett Drive	Dutch Colonial Revival	before 1935	
40 Wachusett Drive	Colonial Revival/Craftsman	before 1935	
42 Wachusett Drive	Frame Tudor Revival (altered)?	after 1935	
43 Wachusett Drive	Bungalow	before 1935	
45 Wachusett Drive	Brick Craftsman	before 1935	
47 Wachusett Drive	Craftsman (altered)?	before 1935	
51 Wachusett Drive	Colonial Revival	after 1935	

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Office of the Secretary, Boston

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Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.



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